Social Media Response to False Confessions in China and the United States

Yu Zhang[1] and Scott S. Tighe[2]

Abstract

Liberal theory embraces the notion that humans, by nature, are good and morally ethical while at the same time institutions of government can be corrupt or unjust. Neoliberalism, a theoretical outgrowth of liberalism, holds government institutions should be limited in their intrusion into regulating business activities and should assure social stability for the benefit of economic growth. There are many tense issues that arise when considering police institutions as they act when dealing with the members of the community they are supposed to serve. These issues range from public protests to false confessions to excessive force to corruption. These issues also transcend borders and exist from state to state and country to country. This study will apply neoliberal theory as it applies to China and the United States and the respective public reactions to such abuses as false confessions and its destructive aftermath expressed through social media.

[1] SUNY at Brockport
[2] Western Oregon University

Corresponding Author: Yu Zhang, myzhang@brockport.edu

Introduction

Drawing on opinions from citizens is crucial for the government decision-making process. The public's opinions used to be collected through face to face strategies, such as meetings and open gatherings, which are limited by location, time and funding. A growing number of Internet technology applications provides the public ways to improve the civic engagement and public opinion distribution. Especially the Web 2.0 technology has presented social media as an effective tool for the public participation in civic engagement, holding government accountable. Citizens use online networking to post their comments and opinions regarding current public affairs. These online comments also become a tool, which is less demanding and more affordable, for social scientists to study public opinions expressed in the Internet era. These web-based social networks regularly convey information about general suppositions and recognitions that is equivalent to open remarks assembled through survey research approaches.

There are many tense issues that arise when considering law enforcement (primarily police) actions when dealing with the members of the community they are supposed to serve. These issues range from corruption to excessive force to false confessions. These issues also transcend borders and exist from state to state and country to country. This study will focus on the existence of false confessions, either forced or coerced, as a form of abusive police power, at issue in China and the United States and the respective public reaction to such abuses expressed through social media.

By 2015, according to a Pew research center report[1] nearly two-thirds of American adults (65%) use social networking sites and one-half billion of Chinese people use all kinds of social media. A recent new word, Netizen, was created which means a person who actively uses the Internet, especially in a proper and responsible way according to Merriam-Webster online dictionary.[2] Social media provides a new effective tool for social science research.

This study uses social media analysis and content analysis to test whether that social media accurately measures citizen attitudes towards the police in documented cases of exposed false confessions. The underlying theory, neoliberal theory, here is that although protecting social order is the premise for police service in China and police service in the United States is built on the rule of law, the resultant attitudes of citizens to the abuse of police power are similar. Essentially, this paper evaluates whether public responses, as revealed in social media, are similar despite the different structural and cultural premises underlying police services. This comparison will identify both variations and commonalities between the two countries citizens' attitudes toward false confessions.

This research is based primarily on data gathered from U.S. and Chinese attitudes as posted by citizens on social media. The social media data assembled for this study are collected through microblogs in both countries based on netizens' online expressions towards false confessions. Different from traditional social media, the tweets of a microblog can spontaneously involve a large number of people in certain discussions and taken in combination form a very responsive virtual community. Through this data source we can record, without contamination by outside observers, the spontaneous exchanges among people about issues of concerns and shared problems. These social media data can be subject to content analysis and intensive case studies alike. Citizen attitudes will be examined by comparing Chinese and American police case studies of documented false confessions, taking into account the role social media as a measure of citizen dissatisfaction with the use of false confessions. This article specifically illustrates how social media measures citizen attitudes towards the police. Since social media data analysis of this type has rarely been used in criminal justice research, the research reported here will hopefully reveal valuable findings and illustrate the potential for other applications of this analytical tool.

Neoliberalism and Criminal Justice

Neoliberalism concentrates power into the hands of a ruling class[3] and the private sector embracing the principle that less government and less democratic participation is good for society. Noam Chomsky notes, "We destroy or at least undermine the governing mechanisms by which people at least in principle can participate to the extent society's democratic (Chomsky, 2017). In Neoliberalism theory, the state is strong in ensuring capital accumulation and regulating poor and working-class people (Bourdieu, 1998; Gill, 2003). This research explores how the dynamics of neoliberal theory as applied to modern society demonstrates how the ruling class in both China and the United States including their respective bureaucracies promote neoliberal economic policies, preserve the status quo, contain social disruption, and that citizens must employ social media as a tool to initiate positive social change including the criminal justice system.

Although structurally different, both China and the U.S. share a common reality. That is, both countries have deeply entrenched bureaucracies that control their respective social constructs and criminal justice systems. In each instance, the respective bureaucracies are well insulated and controlling. The most significant

commonality is that in both cases bureaucracies benefit from the system of governance they oversee and control.

In this research, we explore the dynamics of neoliberal theory as applied to the criminal justice systems of both China and the United States. Specifically, we look at how a neoliberal philosophy - free trade, no price controls, privatization of government programs, and limited government intrusion in the economy, and influences on the criminal justice system.

In China, a variation of the neoliberal philosophy, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, was implemented (sometimes referred to as "Xiaokang") and shows how post- "open door" China blended the Chinese central government control of society with applied neoliberal principles to the Chinese economy (Harvey, 2005). This approach applies to the bureaucracy and its control of the Chinese judiciary. In the U.S. an entrenched bureaucracy is wholly contained in the criminal justice system, referred to as the criminal justice industrial complex in this research.

Liberal theory (liberalism's precursor) embraces the notion that humans, by nature, are good and morally ethical while at the same time institutions of government can be corrupt or unjust. Neoliberalism, a resurgence of liberalism, advocates implementing the economic principles of free trade, minimal government regulation, and privatization and supports government institutions to maintain the structural status quo whether the result is just or unjust. This dynamic is coupled with the continued incarceration of people of color in the U.S. In fact, whether in a philosophical system of governance operating within a liberal or neoliberal framework people of color have been victimized by discriminatory law enforcement consistently over the decades under the guise of ensuring the status quo.

In their article, "What is Neoliberalism," Martinez and Garcia point out, "The beneficiaries of neo-liberalism are a minority of the world's people. For the vast majority it brings even more suffering than before: suffering without the small, hard-won gains of the last 60 years, suffering without end" (Martinez and Garcia, 2015, p. 1).

This study focuses on the existence of an abhorrent bureaucratic policing tool, false confessions, either induced or coerced, as a form of abusive bureaucratic police power where the victims are more likely to be poor and racial/ethnic minorities. At issue in China and the United States are the respective public reactions to such abuses expressed through social media. The data by examination of the case studies demonstrates that both the Chinese public and American public are compelled to be reactive and prone to express their opinions regarding

injustices via social media. It appears that both Chinese and Americans are quick to express their belief in and support of civil liberties and are less tolerant of abusive police enforcement of the law.

In their study of Chilean social protest, Valenzuela et al. write that "at the individual level, existing research shows a positive relationship between the frequency of social media use and protest participation" (Valenzuela et al., 2014, p. 2049). They also note that Facebook is a source of "social reinforcement." Continuing, they write that: "Based on the literature discussed so far, it is expected that using Facebook and Twitter—the most prominent social media among Chilean young adults—is associated with engagement in protest activities because the social media sites provide political information, enable users to discuss political issues, and help coordinate protests" (Ibid., p. 2049). Cabalin, in his study related to the 2011 Chilean student protests, found that:

> *In Chile, the neoliberal model in education was imposed in the '80s during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, implementing the privatization of the educational system, increasing competition, the pauperization of teaching jobs, the weakening of public education, among other specific aspects of the neoliberalization of education on a global scale (McCarthy, 2011). Thus, in 2011, the supposed neoliberal progress faced a critical review by the majority of the population for the first time in 30 years, surprising the administrators of the economic and political systems (Cabalin, 2014, p. 27).*

Cabalin holds that social media, Facebook in particular, provided an essential tool for student organizers to motivate, coordinate, and educate student activists in their quest for educational revisions in Chile. Cabalin writes, "Digital social networks allow for that message to go viral, thus leading to mass impact, especially among the youth sectors. This was understood by the Student Federation of the University of Chile through the use of its Facebook page as the means to distribute their message" (Cabalin, 2014, p. 28).

Noam Chomsky argues the dramatic shift from the placid 1950's to the protest era of the 1960's and 1970's by "the special interests" (he lists minorities, young people, old people, farmers, workers, women) caused too much pressure and government institutions could not handle it. The result is the resurgence of neoliberalism. Society's only hope at this point is an engaged public. Social media is a vehicle available to citizens estranged from the political system to be engaged and active in spite of institutional barriers (Lydon, 2017, p.10).

In the ideal neoliberal world, there must exist political, social, and economic order. To this end the criminal justice system assures order and arguably primarily to the benefit of affluent whites in America and the established bureaucracy in China at the expense of people of color in the U.S and the rural and working classes in China. "The practical implementation of neoliberal policies will, therefore, lead to a relocation of power from political to economic processes, from the state to markets and individuals, and finally from the legislature and executives' authorities to the judiciary" (Thorsen and Lie, 2009, p. 8).

The Criminal Justice Industrial Complex

In our research we characterize the criminal justice system as the Criminal Justice Industrial Complex (CJIC). We define the CJIC as a system of interdependent entities including district attorney offices, police departments, the courts, corrections (a case is made that the prison-industrial complex is a subset of the CJIC), parole and probation, private sector corporations, etc. that forms a complex fed by an insatiable appetite for funding and self-preservation (Henrichson, C. and R. Delaney. 2012, p. 1).

In China, the executive bureaucracy remains a dominant force in Chinese jurisprudence. From the imperial era to Mao's Cultural Revolution, to the planned economy which ultimately fosters a growing middle class in China and an increasing income disparity favoring the Chinese elite, the political bureaucracy, grounded in Confucian tradition, remains in the center of the society. This well established and entrenched executive bureaucracy hampered the growing of an independent judicial branch. The possible agent to balance such a powerful bureaucracy is a civil society (Zhang, 2016, Harvey, 2005).

The technological advances in the 21st Century bring a prominent virtual civil society to China through the Internet and social media. Social media entails websites for social networking and microblogging through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other forms of content (Zhang, 2016). In China, social media is not only a tool for communication, but has also become both a place of collective opinion expression and seedbed of social forces. It is important to note "that the Internet has created an unprecedented space for civil discourse in China; it represents a vibrant virtual social which enables the ongoing efforts to build effective rule of law to resonate throughout the Chinese cyberspace and among its netizens" (Zhang, 2016, p. 159).

U.S. Law Enforcement in the Militarization Era

The militarization of U.S. law enforcement is a phenomenon where the perpetuation of the system is characterized by a militarized police agency dependent on the continued incarceration of American citizens – whether guilty or not. It is a law enforcement approach that emphasizes a more aggressive approach to ensure the rule of law and local order. In fact, current events (Ferguson, Cleveland, New York, South Carolina, New Mexico, Oklahoma, California, Arizona, and the many other documented examples) present evidence that there is no reality of "serve and protect" the community. The reality is that there is a growing use of SWAT teams and military-style tactics.

The police are the most visible representation of the CJIC. With the military dressed and outfitted SWAT and Riot units presenting the most lethal aspect of the CJIC. This is coupled with the growing citizen video evidence of occurrences in excessive force exerted on citizens across the United States. Yet modern technology has changed the dynamics of police-citizen relations. The usage of smartphones and social media brings to light the concerning metamorphosis of a police culture gone awry. In cases where the police are out of control and organizational change must be implemented to protect citizens from the very entities sworn to protect the citizens. But how do citizens get the horse back in the barn once it is out? This is a challenge and to date failure of changing the current police culture of protecting and serving law enforcement.

Among the most insidious practices of police abuses stands the compelling use of "false confessions" as a tool in seeking the solving of a crime. The pervasiveness and extent of securing false confessions are incalculable. What is known is that the number of case studies is increasing. The use of modern technology and social media are clearly shedding light on the magnitude of false confessions.

Leo states "a false confession is an admission ("I did it") plus a post-admission narrative (a detailed description of how and why the crime that the confessor did not commit (Leo, R.A. 2009. p. 333). Leo and Ofshe state, "as many investigators have recognized, the problems caused by police-induced false confessions are significant, recurrent, and deeply troubling" (Leo and Ofshe, 1999. p. 430). Leo and Ofshe present the reader a stark and shocking accounting of the devastating effects of false confessions.

Leo and Ofshe begin by describing the dire consequences of a defendant succumbing to giving a false confession making a case that a false confession trumps all other evidence presented in a trial including eyewitnesses and other

forms of evidence used to prove guilt or innocence. Consequently, any innocent defendant that provides a false confession most probably assures their conviction even though they are innocent.

Who Feeds the System and Why?

Most studies related to the U.S. criminal justice system acknowledge that people of color (African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asians) disproportionately populate the criminal justice system. People of color are more likely to be stopped by the police, arrested, and, prosecuted by district attorneys. The *New York Times* reports, "In 2000, there were 791,600 black men in jail or prison and 603,032 enrolled in colleges or universities." By contrast, in 1980, "there were 143,000 black men in jail or prison but 463,700 enrolled in colleges or universities" (Butterfield, 2002, p.1). Waterman states, "The overrepresentation of black men in America's prisons suggests that the U.S. criminal justice system has a history of discriminating against this subset of the population" (Waterman, 2016, p.6).

Advances in technology, now, allow citizens to capture police abuses using the video feature on their smartphone and then virtually stream the abuse worldwide as the events unfold. Now we see citizen demonstrations and protests against police use of excessive force, riots in the streets, worldwide media coverage, citizen fear and hostility that must be addressed first by legislative action and possibly Federal action.

In response to the 2015 spate of white police officer shootings of blacks, many of which were recorded, on May 1, 2015, the Department of Justice announced the commitment of $25 million to aid local governments to purchase body cameras (USDOJ, 2015). It is pitiful that citizens need to be protected from police brutality by the use of body cameras to assure police officer accountability rather than police modifying their culture to avoid senseless acts of brutality and bullying.

The judiciary, a member of the CJIC, uses both legal and non-legal mechanisms to ensure social order. The non-legal mechanisms are magnified when considering police actions while interacting with the members of the community they are supposed to serve. These non-legal mechanisms range from false confessions to excessive force to corruption. These issues also transcend borders and exist from state to state and country to country. This study will focus on the existence of false confessions, either forced or coerced, as a form of abusive police power where the victims are more likely to be poor and racial/ethnic minorities. At issue in China and the United States and the respective public reaction to such abuses expressed through social media.

Methodology

The methodology utilized in this research is new and novel. We use data gathered by participants of microbloggers. We contend microblogs are equally valid in that the responses which are spontaneous and gripped in the passion of the bloggers. In using both research methods in social science, quantitative and qualitative research, survey research is dependent on the honesty and sincerity of the respondents. Respondents to a survey research's replies assume a certain degree of validity based on decades of utilization.

However, survey research has restrictions. First, the survey is superficial because it cannot learn the complexity or subtlety of that person's thought process in formulating his/her opinion by using a simple questionnaire (Brooker & Schaefer, 2006). For example, a survey question asks respondents "How do you rate your local police department's job?" If the respondent rates as "good," It is not clear why he/she choose "good" rather than "excellent" or "fair." Second, we only get limited information from respondents in survey or interview (Brooker & Schaefer, 2006). In addition, those responses are completed in short period, and respondents may have no time to reflect on the questions. We cannot catch their further thoughts since it is a one-time deal. Third, we only get each respondent's opinions individually in survey or interview, so no respondent can influence another respondent's answer. But this way cannot model the political world where people do influence each other's opinions (Brooker & Schaefer, 2006). In other words, we cannot measure interactions among public opinions which are prevalent in reality. Fourth, survey or interview only can approximate the public opinions but never can really measure what the public opinion is. During a survey or interview, questions only cover what researchers want to know, and they may not be what the public wants to discuss. It raises a question. What is public opinion? Is it the answer in those surveys or interviews? Or should it be what the public wants to express freely even without a prompt? In sum, traditional data collection methods in public opinion are a researcher-oriented method. Researchers generate what they want to know and then obtain public's passive responses.

Public opinion's definition is operationalized as the unregulated "marketplace of ideas" (Held, 1996). It is linked quite explicitly with free and open discussion of political and social affairs, by which an expression of the common will is formulated through reasoned debate (Price, 2008). We can see the traditional survey methods are not a really good way to measure current public opinion. A better measurement

of public opinion should happen in a free forum where people can exchange ideas and interact with each other.

The Internet provides a free forum for the public to express their opinions; it is a marketplace full of ideas. Netizen is a recent word created in the Internet era and means a person who actively uses the Internet, especially in a proper and responsible way according to Merriam-Webster online dictionary.[4] The public discussions on social media have most clearly pushed the phenomenon of "online activism" to a very high degree. Social media in China is increasingly becoming both a reflection of public opinion and seedbed of new social forces.

According to a 2015 Pew Research Center report, nearly two-thirds of American adults (65%) use social networking sites, and this trend is prevalent across the entire population no matter of age, gender or social economic status: Ninety percent of young adults and 35% of all those 65 and older both use social media; 68% of all women and 62% of all men both use social media[5]. Social media use is no longer a privilege of high income or high education levels. More than half (56%) of those living in the lowest-income households and more than half of those with a high school diploma or less are using social media. This trend is obvious in China. By July 2017, China already had 751 million Internet users, holding the world's most active social-media population microblogging, in particular, has become part of people's daily life with the rapid development of mobile, "smart," devices. The China Internet Network Information Center's report shows that there have been over 340 million microblog users by the end of June 2016. Microblogs nowadays are very popular and attract all kinds of people in China. The latest research from Data Center of China Internet (DCCI) shows that microblog users in China accounted for 88.81% of total Chinese netizens and the average age in 2014 is 30.4 years old.[6] A McKinsey survey of 5,700 the Internet users in China has found that 95 percent of those living in Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 cities are registered on one or more social media sites (Chiu, Lin and Silverman, 2012). The most popular Internet products in China are now social media, which entails websites for social networking and microblogging through which users create online communities to share information.

The Internet has facilitated the environment for what Habermas (1962) has defined as the public sphere and it has become a tool to pursue free expression. The Internet becomes a new such place within the public sphere, and it allows the "web surfers" to act as consumer and creator of information simultaneously. The Internet actually bears similarities to real-life communication prototypes. In addition, it can also help with more types of social interactions rather than simply having conversations and can also build new channels of communications between

the mass media and the public. Because the Internet is much less constrained by the state than other forms of social interaction, it promises much easier and wider access for people to obtain information, and it assists people to connect with each other and stand up to support political democratization (Liu, 2011). The Internet can extend the scope of relations in the physical world and can overcome the constraints of time and space (Tai, 2006). The Internet creates a new social space which is not only informational but also participatory. The widespread participation of people on the Internet creates an opportunity for public opinion researchers to collect data from those online expressions. Those people on social media are free to voice their opinions and interact with each other. This imitates the real political world where people do influence each other's opinions and we then can measure interactions among public opinions.

Chinese Culture and Attitudes toward Law Enforcement

Different from America, China is a largely homogenous culture conducive to widely shared values such as collectivism, family, shame, informal codes of conduct, and respect for authority (Anderson & Gil, 1998; Grant, 1989; Jiao, 2001; Ren, 1997; Troyer & Rojek, 1989; Zhang & Messner, 1995; Zhang et al., 1996). Chinese people tend to rest their hopes of attaining justice and achieving a good life on the bureaucracy and on their public officials (Zhang, 2016). Since the Imperial era, the core functions of policing, prosecution and conducting of trials had all been addressed solely by the government bureaucracy. The Chinese police, as part of the criminal justice system, have great authority and power over ordinary citizens (Biddulph, 1993; Ma, 1997; Wang, 1996). The World Values Survey found that Chinese were less likely to accept the criminal behavior and tended to have higher levels of confidence in the police (Cao & Hou, 2001).

Since the late 1970s, profound changes have occurred in every sector of the Chinese society. A rapid economic development has substantially increased social inequality in China which has led to escalating social tensions and conflicts (Cao & Dai, 2001; Wu & Sun, 2009). On one hand, governmental officials tend to enjoy substantial power in all state-owned enterprises (Nee, 1983; Nee, 1996). On the other hand, newly rich, mainly entrepreneurs and investors, also start to have more political power (Wu & Sun, 2009). In order to face diverse challenges from social conflict, increasing crime rates and maintain social order, the main police mission has focused on "the needs of economic development," especially protecting the interests, security, and property of entrepreneurs and investors (Wong, 2002). In

addition, more and more citizens are aware of personal rights and look for ways to protect their interests from the state's power. These challenges may cause changes in the public attitude toward police.

Limited research has been published on the public's attitude towards the police in China (Cao & Hou, 2001). Some research shows generally high levels of public confidence and trust in the police (Cao & Hou, 2001; Michelson & Read, 2011). The Chinese police often rely on families, schools, and community leaders for support and mediation to solve social conflict (Jiao, 2001), and part of the police function is often delegated by members' monitoring with groups (Bond & Hwang, 1986; Chiu & Kosinski, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1994). However, scholars argued that the harmonious and cooperative public-police relationship in China is dubious and is a result of Chinese culture of respect for authority (Bracey, 1989; Troyer & Rojek, 1989). A comparative study also shows that the public in the U.S. has greater confidence in the police than do their Chinese counterparts (Cao & Hou, 2001).

One barrier to conducting research on public attitudes toward police in China is the lack of data. Because the public's perceptions of crime and attitudes toward police were to a certain extent related to the effects of media framings (Chan & Chan, 2012), scholars argued that it is relatively difficult to obtain the meaningful data of public's opinion in China where media is largely under government control (Cao & Hou, 2001). Prior research used principally survey research (Anderson & Gil, 1998; Grant, 1989; Jiao, 2001; Ren, 1997; Troyer & Rojek, 1989; Zhang & Messner, 1995; Zhang et al., 1996; Cao & Hou, 2001, Michelson & Read, 2011). As we discussed before, survey research and the survey method have limitations, so social media data may open a new door for our research.

American Culture and Attitudes toward Law Enforcement

Using a political science methodology in determining how citizens shape their attitudes towards the police in the U.S. several stages shape how citizens form their attitudes towards government in general and the police in particular. These stages include values and beliefs, political ideology, public opinion, and finally, attitudes. The first, values and beliefs, are the "values underlie deep-rooted goals, aspirations, and ideals that shape an individual's perceptions of political issues and events" (Ginsberg, 2017, p. 201). Many political scientists note that a core value for most Americans is the notion of embracing liberty, equality, and democracy (Dautrich and Yalof, 2012, Ginsberg, 2017, Wilson, et.al.). However, that is arguably different for America's non-white population. The pursuit of liberty, equality, and democracy is, and has been far more challenging for America's people of color (Tanslitz, 2006).

The neoliberal takeover of judicial instruments results in the fact that people of color face persistent, institutional discrimination, either intentionally or unwittingly, by members of the white community. Discrimination by whites against non-white minority groups (hereby referred to as "people of color") serves the manifestation of the persistent discrimination that is a representation of discrimination on a broader scale involving all non-white ethnic groups worldwide. Local law enforcement, the judiciary, county commissions, city councils, and the community all contribute to the perpetuation of discrimination (Tighe and Brown, 2015).

Case Studies: China and the U.S.

Case Study of China

We chose a case in China from the news portal of Phoenix New Media, a multimedia which covers an audience of approximately 500 million globally. For news stories on the Phoenix website, readers can post comments, re-post comments or re-tweet comments to show their attitude towards particular events. This provides us a way to collect comments and explore readers' attitudes. The case with the largest amount of comments was chosen. It is the case of Qian Renfeng of all false confession cases, with 2354 comments; it was the case with the most comments among all false confession cases reported by Phoenix New Media.

Qian, a 17-year-old girl in 2002, was a nursing student in a school in Qiaojia County in Southwest China's Yunnan Province. In February 2002, Qian was convicted of killing a child in a kindergarten class by putting rat poison in the child's food. During 12 hours of interrogation, Qian was forced onto her knees for hours and her face was beaten with a leather shoe. Police said she confessed but Qian disputed the confession claiming she had been suffering from severe fatigue and torture. Qian was tried before an autopsy on the deceased child was completed and the autopsy was inconclusive as to the cause of death. However, based primarily on her alleged confession, Qian was given a lenient sentence of life in prison because she was 17 at the time of the child's death. She was also ordered deprivation of her political rights for life.[7] On May 30, 2013, the Yunnan Provincial Procuratorate began a post-conviction review of Qian's case, and almost two years later, on May 4, 2015, notified Qian that because "facts are unclear and insufficient evidence," it would recommend her retrial to the Yunnan Provincial High Court. The investigation discovered a number of irregularities in Qian's alleged confession, including that her signature had been forged on some of the confession

documents. On December 21, 2015, the Higher People's Court of Yunnan Province acquitted Qian after her re-trial, on the basis there was insufficient evidence to prove her guilt. The Court stated the prosecution's case had many contradictions and presented unreasonable explanations for the origin of the poison and the time and method of placing it. Qian was released after more than 13 years in custody.

This news was posted by Phoenix at midnight on December 22, 2015, and received 2,343 comments within 118 pages. People who posted comments were spread across the whole country, including 141 cities in 32 provincial areas of China, as well as nine from the United States, three from Malaysia, and 54 without location. After excluding those comments from locations outside of China and those without locations, we obtained 2,280 comments. These comments included 57,705 Chinese characters, and keywords of the highest frequency are "Held Accountable" (n=275), "Compensation" (n=273), and "False Confession" (n=270).

First, we conducted a sentimental analysis to see the attitude of commentators, using the NLP tool.[8] This tool only can process 5,000 Chinese characters each time. We divided 2343 comments into 12 parts and then put into the processing and these comments show negative emotion. We then characterize these comments into seven categories. First, criticize and hold those police officer accountable (A); second, release disappointment and sadness (B); third, explore the reason and possible solution of false confession (C); fourth, support police and quest for the real criminal (D); fifth, positive towards this news (E); sixth, praise the lawyer (F); seventh, bless and wish the girl well (G). Readers not only can comment but also can show support to those comments by recommendations. They also show their attitude through retweeting and further comments on previous comments.

Table 1: China case study comments by characterization category

Category	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
N	1,086	843	286	55	36	31	6
%	46%	36%	12%	2%	2%	1%	0.2%

Criticize false confessions and hold police officers accountable

There are 1,086 comments in this category and it represents the opinions of the most readers. A commentator from *Liaoning* Province, named as *Mofashi*, says "Hold them accountable!" and this comment received 9,430 recommendations from people who saw this news. This comment was retweeted 12 times by different commentators who express supports. Commentator *ltby234,* from Shanxi Province, says, "Investigate those relevant people! Request for compensation from the

government!" and his comment received 8,323 recommendations. It was also re-tweeted by 23 people with supporting comments.

Eighty-four comments say that those people who committed torture should be imprisoned for years in order to compensate Qian's suffering. A commentator from Hebei Province says, "Hold them accountable and sentence those police officers 13 years in prison." This comment was supported by 2,823 people. Commentator *f1* from Beijing says, "These officers should be sentenced to death." Ninety-nine people recommended this. Another agrees that those officers should be sent to prison for 13 years without probation and also "the government should compensate victims". 17,059 people recommend this comment.

Chinese state compensation law was promulgated on May 12, 1994, and was revised in 2012. This law has several issues: First, it has no compensation for emotional harm. Second, the compensation standard is based on national average salary which is relatively low. Third, the procedure is not reasonable for victims must apply for compensation to the government agencies which cause the harm. Fourth, after compensation, no effective procedure exists for government agencies to further hold individual government employees who cause the harm accountable.

Commentators of Qian's case have noticed these deficiencies. One hundred and eighty-three people felt that spending 16 years in prison is so heinous nothing can compensate for this punishment. Five people agree that 5 million should be compensated. Four people suggest $500 million *Yuan* in compensation and two people suggest $1 billion *Yuan*. Forty-four people left comments and exclaimed that Qian should ask for compensation directly from those officers who abuse power instead of state compensation. Commentator *b9* from Hubei Province says, "State compensation uses our taxpayer's money. Hold those individual officers accountable and ask them to make compensation. Whoever did wrong should take responsibility. "That is real fairness." This comment received 22 recommendations. Another comment says, "Why do our taxpayers' money have to be used due to individual officers' wrongdoing?" and it received 37 recommendations.

Twenty-two commentators hoped the media could continue reporting the case and make sure individual officers will be punished. Commentator *Nakeadi* from Henan Province says, "I hope the media can follow this news and show us the justice!" Twenty-six people recommended this comment. Nine people worried about whether justice finally can be done. One person from Jilin Province says "Hold accountable? It will fade away slowly."

Although most comments do show the improvement of people's belief in the rule of law in China, some comments are full of revenge without law. Nine people commented that revenge should be taken towards officers and they should be tortured to death. Commentator *F3d* from Liaoning Province says, "Kill those officers who abused power and their family members and crucified their corps on the Cross." Two people thought that there is karma for those officers who will finally go down to the hell.

These 1,086 comments express people's anger on abuse of power by police officers. We see more people realize the importance of holding government employees accountable through legal tools. There is a rise of the people's knowledge of the law and legal system. Most people know the state compensation system. It is very interesting that they are very aware of the limitations of this system and express the need to improve this system. More and more people realize that they, as taxpayers, should have the power to hold government accountable.

Release, disappointment, and sadness

Eight hundred and forty-three comments expressed disappointment and sadness by the readers. A commentator from Hebei Province sighed, "I feel sad whenever I see this type of news." Four thousand, two hundred and seventy-four people recommended this comment. Some people realize the legal system has limitations. A commentator from Liaoning Province says, "Law only regulates those who have no power and no money." Thirty-eight people recommended this comment. Some people express their distrust toward judicial officers. An anonymous reader remarks, "In order to get rewards, most of the justice agents lose their consciousness, and people live in darkness." They even curse and totally deny the legal system. Commentator *kr* from Heilongjiang Province says, "How many people died under tortured confession, I curse this most shameless organization in this world." A commentator referred to as *Aiou Beauty Salon*, from Guangdong Province says, "No one will be held accountable, don't believe? Let's wait and see." Eighteen people recommended this comment. *Winter Vacation Worker* from Henan Province says, "It is easy to be a police officer, as long as you can beat people!" Another comment says, "There is injustice everywhere, we cannot change it and nothing we can do."

Some people express their fear of false confessions. *Zyxinth* from Henan Province says, "False confession is so scary!" Forty-four people recommended this comment. *Blue Sky* from Sichuan Province says, "I fear that I would be the next one wronged." *lh_jxnch* from Jiangxi Province says, "The result of the unjust system is

that we will become next Qian, I am terrified." *Mecooll* from Hunan Province says, "It is scary that the Police commit wrongdoings."

These comments are full of anger, fear, sadness, and desperation, which are not only due to this case but also reflect the public's long-term dissatisfaction with the justice system. Although these comments are negative, they do have some positive effects. First, this shows the increasing awareness of citizens' rights in China. Chinese people have been obedient to authority and have now changed. Second, this shows the increasing freedom of speech which opens the possibility to reform.

Explore the deep reasons of false confessions

Two hundred and sixty-eight comments tried to explore the reasons and possible solutions of false confessions. For most reasons, people agree that officers do not observe the law. A commentator known as *Silence is Golden* from Jiangsu Province says, "The legal system was not perfect 10 years ago and individual officers can decide the case the way they want." Commentator *Kou Jiao Qin Xiang* from Hebei Province says, "This is not a responsibility issue, it is an issue of ignoring law and people. People who administrate law go against the law, and they should be imprisoned for years." A person commented, "It is impossible to hold those officers accountable since they may have been promoted to higher level." It discloses that one reason of false confession is a quick clearance rate of the criminal case may become the qualification for promotion. Some people realize that it is a rule of law issue. A commentator known as *Cold Heart* from Zhejiang Province says, "We all could become Qian tomorrow. Citizens, get together and unite everyone, put the power into the cage!"

More people posted possible solutions related to this issue. One solution is lifetime accountability. A reader from Shaanxi Province says, "China should have lifetime accountability system for officers." Thirty-two people recommend this comment. A reader from Guangxi Province says, "Criminal case investigators have lifetime accountability, if they did wrong in the investigation, they will be held accountable even they are 99 years old, then justice agent dare not misjudge cases." Another comment says, "False confession needs lifetime accountability." A reader from Chongqing City says, "It is urgent to make legislation to increase punishment of people who abuse power and hold them accountable for their lifetime. "Besides lifetime accountability, a reader from Sichuan says, "We should establish jury system and supervision system." Another one, identified as *Turn the Tide in Danger,* from Zhejiang Province says, "China needs legal reform, the Police should only have the power to arrest, only the Court and Jury has the power to

convict defendants." *I Don't Like Secular* from Henan Province says, "This shows that American's jury system has advantages." China has no comparable jury system as the U.S. though some people already start discussing the possibility of a jury trial.

Support police and quest for the real criminal

Fifty-five comments focus on finding the real criminal. Forty people focus on who is the real criminal. A commentator identified as *Life is Bitter and Pray for the Next Life*, from Zhejiang Province, asks, "Who is the real murderer killing that 2-year kid?" A reader from Henan Province says "The big issue is the real murderer is gone, and cannot be found." Commentator *rgy19630909* from Jilin Province says, "I am more concerned about who is the real murderer."

Fifteen people really support the police's work. *Peace,* from Henan Province says, "There is doubt in this case due to lack of evidence, but Qian cannot be excluded beyond doubt. It is not wrong for the Police to do continuous interrogation, so do not criticize officers." *f2b* from Shaanxi Province says, "The Police serve the people, absolutely support those officers in this case." Seventeen people recommended this comments. A reader from Beijing says, "Those so-called not-guilty people actually are criminals, but we follow the presumption of innocence rule." Still another, identified as *Summer Rain and No Clouds,* from Ningxia Province says, "She was declared as not guilty because no clear evidence exists? Does it mean she is definitely not the murderer? No, no one will admit guilty without evidence." One hundred forty-three people recommended this comment. A reader from Yunnan Province says, "LOL, I think Qian is happy, and she pretends to be a victim. I do not believe she was wronged." Eight people recommended this comment. *Too Many Fools* from Zhejiang Province says, "Do not pursue the truth blindly, you will lose political standing." This comment received 47 recommendations.

Substantive justice has been a rule for Chinese justice system and procedural justice has been neglected. Commentators from this category represent people who are really concerned about substantive justice. A justice system based on substantive justice still rooted in Chinese legal culture.

Positive attitudes towards this news

Thirty-six people see a positive trend from this news. A reader from Beijing says, "The country has become better now." Thirty-five people recommend this comment. *Real Voice* from Guangdong Province says, "Good! Correcting the wrong case shows a success of our reform and emphasis on people's life. To correct mistakes if you have made any and guard against them if you have not." *Janycao* from Guangdong Province says, "Correcting the wrong case one by one lets me see the hope of the country!" Eleven people recommend this comment.

Interestingly, some comments show a grateful mind to the authority. A reader from Zhejiang Province says, "The wrong case has been corrected, you should thank the Party and country! Otherwise, you will not be only imprisoned for 13 years." This comment received 89 recommendations. Another reader, *Meet Weak Teammates*, from Shanxi Province says, "Thanks for today's wise leader, and we should appreciate it!" In his comment, he used a word "今上" to refer the leader, and this word in Chinese means "Emperor." Although it may be only a joke, it shows that obedience to authority is rooted in people's mind.

Praise the lawyer

Thirty-one readers praised and thanked the lawyer who helped Qian gain freedom. The social status of lawyers in China is not high due to historical reasons. Lawyers have been prohibited from practicing law in the judicial process for thousands of years in ancient time (Zhang, 2016). A writer known as *zhou669955* from Zhejiang Province says, "Lawyer *Yang*, you are great, you deserve the high praise!" Thirty-nine people recommend this comment. A reader from Hubei Province says, "The lawyer is great to offer free legal assistance!" A reader from Chongqing city says "Chinese society needs lawyers. Lawyers can improve this society, making it more civilized, fairer, more harmonious. Praise you, lawyer!" Praises for lawyers show people's growing confidence in law and legal system. Lawyers may become the backbone of legal reform and rule of law in China (Zhang, 2016).

Blessing and wishing the girl well

Six people expressed good wishes to Qian. *5536b* from Jiangxi Province says, "Qian did not complain the society and her suffering after she was out of prison...believe that her future will be bright, go high!" Twenty-one people recommend this comment. *The Other Side of A Starry Sky* from Gansu Province says, "Wish the leaders have a good heart!...Wish more good lawyers can support the justice! Wish this good girl all the peace in her life after this!" *g1289327620* from Yunan Province says, "It is fortunate for you to survive the prison. Accept the reality and live well!"

Case Study of the United States

As with China, we chose a case in the United States from a variety of the news sources which includes multimedia audiences globally. These sources include news organizations (both print and televised news), the Innocence Project, Amnesty

International, the American Civil Liberties Union, university sources, Facebook, Twitter, and others. For news stories on internet websites, readers can post comments, edit comments or retweet comments to show their attitude toward the news. This provides us a way to collect comments and explore readers' attitudes. One case presents an exemplary case study with a representative and a lot of comments that chosen. This case, Jeffrey Mark Deskovic, a Minnesota teenager at the time, had 22 comments with the Washington Post alone. This case generated comments, albeit a much lower volume than the Qian case, among all false confession cases found on the internet.

Deskovic, a 17-year-old high school student in 1990, was accused of the rape and murder of Angela Correa. The crime occurred on November 15, 1989 in Peekskill, New York. Angela Correa, Deskovic's classmate, had gone out with a portable cassette player and a camera for her photography class. Her body was found two days later.

Deskovic was convicted of Correa's rape and murder although a DNA test could have exonerated him. Then Peekskill police detective Daniel Stephens asserted that Deskovic had confessed to the crime and then district attorney Jeanine Pirro refused to authorize a DNA test. After eight interrogations and agreeing to a lie detector test Deskovic confessed in the belief that the criminal justice system would ultimately prove his innocence. The Innocence Project reports, "Deskovic's alleged confession occurred after six hours, three polygraph sessions, and extensive questioning by detectives between sessions. One of the detectives accused Deskovic of having failed the test and said he had been convinced of Deskovic's guilt for several weeks" (Innocence Project, 2017. p. 2.). To his dismay, the criminal justice system failed him and ultimately the jury gave greater weight to the confession than the existing physical evidence.

On December 7, 1990 a jury convicted Deskovic based on his confession and the testimony from Peekskill police detective Daniel Stephens. Deskovic proclaimed his innocence on numerous occasions after his conviction and was denied reopening the case on several occasions by the then district attorney Jeanine Pirro. Pirro also refused to authorize a DNA test that could have proved Deskovic's innocence. Pirro declined to run any DNA tests that could help release Deskovic from prison.

In 2006, the new district attorney, Janet DiFiore, authorized a DNA test which led to Deskovic's exoneration. The DNA from the crime scene was matched to Steven Cunningham, another prison inmate who was serving a life term for another murder and he subsequently confessed to Angela Correa's murder. Deskovic's conviction was ultimately overturned and he was released. Late 2014 Deskovic won a $41.6 million lawsuit as a result of his sixteen years of wrongful imprisonment.

The media published the news and was carried by several sources including the Washington Post on December 10, 2015 and the Washington Post received 22 comments and 81 likes posted on their web page. These comments include 1170 letters of the alphabet, and keywords of the highest frequency being "Prosecutor" (n=16) and "False Confession" (n=3).

First, criticize and hold those police officer accountable (A); second, release disappointment and sadness (B); third, explore the reason and possible solution of false confession (C); fourth, support police and quest for the real criminal (D); fifth, positive towards this news (E); sixth, praise the lawyer (F); seventh, bless and wish the defendant well (G).

Readers not only can comment but also can show support to those comments by recommendations. They also show their attitude through posting their comments and likes to the comments.

Table 2: China case study comments by characterization category

Category	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
N	12	2	2	3	1	1	0
%	55%	9%	9%	14%	5%	5%	0%

Criticize false confessions and holding police officers accountable

There are 12 comments in this category and it represents the opinions of the most readers. One commentator noted that: "Was it the detectives or the prosecutor who pushed for a confession? As we have seen in cases in Texas prosecutorial misconduct to further one's political career is more dangerous than cops who don't do their job. Not excusing what these two did but will there be any investigation of the prosecutor and his tactics at the time?" Another commentator said: "Nobody should ever, under any circumstances, allow themselves to be hooked up to a polygraph either - especially if anyone claims it is a "lie detector." Still another commentator, expressing a different point of view, stated, "What I want to know is why prosecutors would charge a man when the sperm inside the victim came from someone else. This means that the real criminal is at large and can rape again."

As noted above, a Chinese state compensation law was promulgated on May 12, 1994 and was revised in 2012 and 2016. Unlike China, though, in the United States compensation may be awarded through a civil lawsuit against the state or the

United States Government. The basis for a civil suit is generally to provide compensation for the injustice of being imprisoned unjustly. These injustices have been noticed by 15 commentators in Deskovic's case. One person felt that 15 years is so precious that nothing can compensate Deskovic for his deprivation. One person posted, "How much would you charge for them destroying your life?"

Release, disappointment, and sadness

Sixteen comments expressed disappointment and sadness by the readers. One commentator posted, "It is fairly easy to get people to "confess" to anything you want them to. Waterboarding works 100% of the time and other techniques that rely on stress are nearly as good. Nothing you get from the subject using these techniques is reliable at all and that's why it is foolish and counterproductive to use them if your objective is to know the truth. Nobody should ever, under any circumstances, allow themselves to be hooked up to a polygraph either - especially if anyone claims it is a "lie detector." Some people realize the legal system has limitations. A commentator said, "Here is what happens when the cops pressure a teen for a confession and he refuses: 34 years of torment." Some people express their distrust toward judicial officers. A commentator posted this remark, "Was it the detectives or the prosecutor who pushed for a confession? As we have seen in cases in Texas prosecutorial misconduct to further one's political career is more dangerous than cops who don't do their job. Not excusing what these two did but will there be any investigation of the prosecutor and his tactics at the time?" They even curse and totally deny the legal system. A commenter posted, "Agreed. Just as bad are prosecutors who zealously defend obviously flawed convictions when the cases are brought up years later with practically irrefutable exculpatory evidence."

Some people expressed their fear of false confessions. Said one reader, "Prosecutors get promoted based on convictions; not proper convictions. Plead five felonies and deal out four in exchange for a plea on one and dismiss the other four still counts as a felony conviction. And a case where the cop gives you a confession is every prosecutor's dream case."

Explore the deep reason of false confession

Several comments try to explore the reasons and possible solution for false confessions. For reasons, most people agree that officers do not observe the law. One commenter stated, "Was it the detectives or the prosecutor who pushed for a confession? As we have seen in cases in Texas prosecutorial misconduct to further one's political career is more dangerous than cops who don't do their job. Not excusing what these two did but will there be any investigation of the prosecutor

and his tactics at the time?" Another commenter stated, "The article does not say what the police may have said to make the kid confess. But one consequence of the death penalty is to give police and prosecutors a weapon to pressure suspects to confess promising "only" prison if a confession is forthcoming. There are documented cases of this." Another observation was, "They care first and foremost about their power, which is based on management of the appearance of bringing justice. If they can bring a conviction, it improves their won-lost record. The case is resolved, and they can move on to the next big thing." Finally, one commentator said: "There are many reasons a prosecutor or detective would pressure a defendant for a false confession. For prosecutors, it's about blind ambition. For detectives, it's about clearing a case. Generally speaking."

Support police and quest for the real criminal

Two commenters supported the police or focused on the settlement. One commentator said, "I don't really understand how this was worth $41 million." Second, a commenter stated, "Hope you don't get jailed for something you did not commit. Then you might understand. Sort of like Abbott in Texas who voted to cap lawsuits after he won his multi-million-dollar lawsuit."

Conclusion

Both China and the United States have notably different criminal justice systems. In the U.S., the criminal justice system is founded on the principle of rule of law. In China, substantive justice has been the norm for the Chinese justice system. However, China is moving to a system of criminal justice based on the rule of law. This is demonstrated by the reforms in the criminal procedures law made in 1996, 2012, and 2016.

Although structurally different, both China and the U.S. share a common reality. That is, both countries have a deeply entrenched bureaucracy that controls their respective criminal justice systems. In both countries' criminal justice systems, the respective bureaucracies are well insulated and controlling. The most significant commonality is that both bureaucracies benefit from the system of governance that oversees and controls the criminal justice system.

In this research, we discussed the dynamics of neoliberal theory. The dynamics of neoliberal theory as applied to modern society demonstrates how the ruling class in both China and the United States, including their respective bureaucracies, promote neoliberal economic policies, preserve the status quo, contain social

disruption, and that citizens must employ social media as a tool to initiate positive social change including the criminal justice system.

So how do citizens hold members of the law enforcement community ethically responsible and accountable? A viable option is presented in this research and that is a dynamic and strong civil society is needed. A civil society presents an important power to restrain officials who lead the governing state from becoming all-powerful, lest they abuse that power to oppress others for their own benefit (O'Brien, 1999). A civil society promotes the rights of man, which are more basic than any political structure, and provides a point of revolutionary leverage from which any state structure may be radically altered (Bellah, 1967).

Social media can efficiently build connections among community members and motivate the participation in a civil society through information sharing and transparency enhancement (Kaigo & Tkach-Kawasaki, 2015). For this research, the key indicator is the rapidly expanding use of the Internet and associated social media that is creating an unprecedented opportunity to build a civil society, especially in developing countries. The Internet provides a perfect place as a free forum for the public to express their opinions. It is a marketplace full of ideas. Netizen is a new word created in the Internet era and means a person who actively uses the Internet, especially in a proper and responsible way according to Merriam-Webster online dictionary. The public discussions on social media have most clearly pushed the phenomenon of "online activism" to a very high degree. Social media in both China and the United States is increasingly becoming both a reflection of public opinion and seedbed of new social forces.

This study focuses on the existence of false confessions, either false or coerced, as a form of abusive bureaucratic law enforcement power where the victims are more likely to be poor and/or racial/ethnic minorities. At issue in China and the United States are the respective public reactions to such abuses expressed through social media. In this research, we present two case studies that are representative of numerous case studies related to false confessions. The data examined in these two case studies demonstrates that both the Chinese public and American public are more proactive and prone to express their opinions regarding injustices via social media. The data clearly shows that Chinese citizens are more prone to express their belief and support of civil liberties through netizen whereas American citizens actively use social media to "go viral" and protest both are less tolerant of abusive police enforcement of the law.

For our China case study, we chose a case from the news portal of Phoenix New Media, a multimedia forum which covers around 500 million audiences globally. For news stories the Phoenix website, readers can post comments, re-post comments

or re-tweet comments to show citizens attitude toward law enforcement. This provided us a way to collect comments and explore readers' attitudes. In the case of Qian Renfeng, there were 2354 comments and this case had the most comments among all false confession cases reported by Phoenix New Media.

As noted above, the data was categorized into seven categories. First, criticize and hold those police officer accountable (A); second, release, disappointment and sadness (B); third, explore the reason and possible solution of false confession (C); fourth, support police and quest for the real criminal (D); fifth, positive towards this news (E); sixth, praise the lawyer (F); seventh, bless and wish the girl well (G). Of the 2354 comments, 82% of the commenters fell into category A, accountability or category B, release disappointment and sadness.

For our United States case study, we chose a case posted on the Washington Post's website. Our case, presents an example case study with a representative and a large amount of comments posted on the internet. This case, Jeffrey Mark Deskovic, had approximately 22 comments with 81 "Likes" on the Washington Post's website alone. This case has a high volume of comments among all false confession cases found on the internet. The case drew comments from a variety of the news sources which includes multimedia audiences globally. These sources include news organizations (both print and televised news), the Innocence Project, Amnesty International, the American Civil Liberties Union, university sources, Facebook, Twitter, and others.

As with the Qian case study, the Deskovic data was categorized into we characterize these comments into seven categories. First, criticize and hold those police officer accountable (A); second, release, disappointment and sadness (B); third, explore the deep reason of the false confession (C); fourth, support police and quest for the real criminal (D); fifth, praise the lawyer (E); sixth, bless and wish Deskovic well (F). Of the 22 comments 55% of the commenters fell into category A, nine percent are in the criticize and hold those police officer accountable or category B, nine percent are in the explore the reason and possible solution of false confession category C, 14% are in the explore the deep reason of false confession. Unlike in China, none of commenters in the United States were in the category praise the lawyer category E and bless and wish Deskovic well category F.

Based on our case studies, we found the data show a high level of citizen dissatisfaction with the Chinese and U.S. law enforcement bureaucracies. Both had high percentages of citizens in the A and B categories. However, in the case study from the United States, none of the commenters blessed and wished Deskovic well.

It is argued that the higher level of outrage expressed through social media in the China case study is due to Chinese citizens' reliance on social media to a higher degree than American citizens. China's citizens' use of social media is generally the most viable option to express their attitudes towards government actions. Citizens in the United States possess other methods of expression such as protest demonstrations and rallies that not available to Chinese citizens.

So, what can be done to resolve the false confession issue? Amelia Hritz, Michal Blau, and Sara Tomezsko advocate: first, "One solution that is being implemented in certain states is recording the entire interrogation of a suspect. This allows investigators to go back and discover where details from the confession came from to determine if they were truly provided by the confessor." And second, "Another way to reduce the likelihood of a false conviction based solely upon confessions is to require corroborating evidence to the confession, as is required when accomplices implicate others in crimes" (Hritz, Blau, and Tomezsko, 2010). This research demonstrates that a possible way to exert influence on policing is by using social media. Social media in the United States is increasingly becoming a vital tool for citizens to initiate social action by "spreading the word" on law enforcement injustices resulting in protests, documenting abuses, and increasing accountability (Harris, 2015; Harlow and Guo, 2014). In China, social media is the principle method of social protest. In both cases, social media is a significant tool for citizens to express their dissatisfaction regarding law enforcement (Zhang, 2016).

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About the Authors

Dr. Yu Zhang is an assistant professor in the Department of Criminal at The State University of New York. She received her law degree (LL.B.) from China and her PhD in Criminology and Public Policy in the U.S. Dr. Zhang's primary teaching and research interests include comparative criminology/criminal justice, policing, law & society and quantitative methodology. She has participated in several international and national research projects. She is currently working on the application of computational methods in social science, including social media data analysis. E-mail: yzhang@brockport.edu

Scott S. Tighe is an associate professor of Criminal Justice at Western Oregon University. His primary research interests center on Native Americans and their culture. He has recently turned his attention to Native Americans ensnared in the criminal justice system. He spent considerable time working with the Western Community Policing Institute on Native American issues, which includes drug use and abuse among Native American tribes. E-mail: tighes@wou.edu

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[1] Pew Research Center report, http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/

[2] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/netizen.

[3] Urban Dictionary defines the ruling class as, "A class of people in a society that exercise authority and control far in excess of their contributions to society...The means of the power by the ruling class is variable, but common techniques include aristocracy and nepotism, manipulation of religion, creating and then preying upon fear, direct violence, control of education, domination of the political system, domination of the judicial system, or domination of the legislative system."

[4] According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, netizen means a person who actively uses the Internet especially in a proper and responsible way; an active participant in the online community of the Internet. December 14th, 2013 retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/netizen.

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[7] http://forejustice.org/db/location/Renfeng--Qian-.html

[8] http://ictclas.nlpir.org/